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Joint Inspection Unit

**Implementation of the recommendations of the
Joint Inspection Unit****Report of the Secretary-General*****Summary*

The present report is presented to the General Assembly pursuant to a series of resolutions dating back to 1972, when the Secretary-General was first requested to submit an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the major recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. The same request was reiterated in several subsequent resolutions.

The report provides updates on the implementation of the recommendations contained in four reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, on: Administration of justice at the United Nations (A/55/57); Delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat (A/55/857); Results-based budgeting: the experience of the United Nations system organizations (A/54/287); and Young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention (A/55/798).

The Secretary-General reiterates the concerns expressed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of his previous report (A/58/220) and invites the General Assembly to consider the discontinuance of the requirement for the report.

* A/59/150.

** The present report is being submitted after the deadline, owing to the need for extensive consultation with the various departments and offices that contributed to its contents.



I. Introduction

1. The mandate for the present report emanates from a series of long-standing resolutions of the General Assembly dating from 1972, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it annually a report on the implementation of the major recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. In paragraph (d) of its decision of 20 November 1975, the Secretary-General was requested to give priority to the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit approved by the legislative bodies and to provide adequate information thereon in his annual report. The General Assembly reiterated its request in resolutions 32/199 of 21 December 1977, 37/124 of 17 December 1982, 39/242 of 18 December 1984 and 48/221 of 23 December 1993.

2. In addition to the present report on the status of implementation, in its resolution 54/16 of 29 October 1999, the General Assembly approved a systematic follow-up mechanism and requested the Joint Inspection Unit to incorporate information on the status of implementation of its recommendations in its annual reports. The Unit's follow-up mechanism as endorsed by the General Assembly provides a more systematic approach to monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit recommendations than the present annual report. At the same time, it will provide Member States with comprehensive, timely and relevant information. Given the above, and further to the concerns expressed in his previous report (A/58/220), the Secretary-General believes that it will be a duplicative exercise to continue to produce his annual report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit.

3. In considering whether it is necessary to continue with this report, the General Assembly may wish to consider the costs involved: over \$1,000 per page to publish a document in six official languages. This report may therefore represent significant direct duplicative publication expenditures. This does not take into account the substantial amount of time involved of staff from the various funds and programmes who contribute to the preparation of the report.

4. To date, the Secretary-General has reported on the implementation of all the major recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit up to and including the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Accordingly, the present report addresses those recommendations considered at the fifty-fifth session that pertain to the United Nations and its funds and programmes, namely those contained in the reports on: young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention (A/55/798); results-based budgeting: the experience of the United Nations system organizations (A/54/287); administration of justice at the United Nations (A/55/57); and delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat (A/55/857). In the interest of brevity, some of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit have been summarized.

II. Administration of justice at the United Nations

5. The comments below pertain to the recommendations contained in the Joint Inspection Unit report entitled "Administration of justice at the United Nations" (JIU/REP/00/1) (A/55/57). The comments by the Secretary-General on the report

were issued in document A/55/57/Add.1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly considered the report under agenda items 116 and 123 in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/55/253 and Corr.1). Although in its related resolution 55/258 of 14 June 2001, the General Assembly did not make specific mention of the Joint Inspection Unit report on the subject, the findings and recommendations of the Unit were taken into account during the deliberations. The subject item entitled "administration of justice" was inscribed as an agenda item for the fifty-sixth session and, in its resolution, the General Assembly took note of the Unit's intention to continue its study of the possible need for higher jurisdiction in consultation with all organizations of the United Nations system, bearing in mind the national system of Member States of the United Nations. The General Assembly considered the report (A/57/441) at its fifty-seventh session and addressed many of the issues raised therein in its resolution 57/307 of 15 April 2003.

6. In its comments on the report (A/57/736), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions noted that the Secretary-General had agreed to implement some of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and that the question of administration of justice should be considered in the context of the Secretary-General's overall human resources management reforms. Having considered the Unit's report entitled, "Reform of the administration of justice in the United Nations system: options for higher recourse instances" (A/57/441) and the comments of the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination thereon (A/57/441/Add.1), the General Assembly affirmed the importance of continuing efforts to ensure that the administration of justice within the United Nations be of the highest standard and also affirmed the importance of the United Nations as an exemplary employer. The Secretary-General was urged to ensure effective and expeditious administration of justice in the Organization and to ensure the highest standard of efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as the principles of fairness and due process serve as the paramount consideration in the system of administration of justice within the United Nations.

Recommendation 1

Creation of an independent office for the settlement of disputes and the administration of justice, comprising an ombudsman function; the secretariat of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal; the secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board and the Committee for Professional Responsibility, established to replace the Joint Disciplinary Committee; and the Office of the Coordinator of the Panel of Counsel, which would report to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

7. As indicated in his report (A/55/57/Add.1), the Secretary-General was not in support of this recommendation. In its resolution 57/307 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take steps to ensure the independence of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the separation of its secretariat from the Office of Legal Affairs, to study the possibility of its financial independence and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. The General Assembly's request was later reverted to its fifty-ninth session in resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003. The Secretary-General has issued his report, entitled,

"Possibility of financial independence of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal from the Office of Legal Affairs (A/59/78)", for the consideration of the General Assembly. Essentially, the report recommends that the General Assembly approve the transfer of resources related to the Tribunal from section 8 of the budget, Legal affairs, to section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, effective as of the biennium 2006-2007.

Recommendation 2

Create an Ombudsman function as a replacement for the Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances to strengthen the system's capability for informal conciliation, mediation and negotiation.

8. While the Ombudsman function has been created, it has not replaced the Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances. This issue is addressed further in the report of the Secretary-General on administration of justice, which is being presented for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The Office of the Ombudsman was established pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 55/258 and 56/253 of 24 December 2001 and the Ombudsman was appointed on 25 October 2002, pursuant to the promulgation of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2002/12.

Recommendation 3 (a)

Amend article 9 of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal to eliminate present restrictions on the Tribunal's authority to order the rescission of the decision contested or the specific performance of the obligation invoked where it considers the application to be well founded. Furthermore, the Tribunal alone should decide on the appropriate amount of compensation to be paid.

9. In section V of his report to the General Assembly (A/56/800), the Secretary-General, having noted a number of differences between the statutes of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal and the practices of the two tribunals, stated that he would be prepared to reconsider his position on the question of specific performance if the statutes and practices of the two tribunals were fully harmonized. He also stated that, alternatively, the current system could be retained with an increase in the limits of compensation to be paid, should the Secretary-General decide, in the interest of the United Nations, that the applicant should be compensated without further action (see A/56/800, paras. 42 and 43).

Recommendation 3 (b)

Member States nominating candidates for the Administrative Tribunal are urged to make every effort to ensure that their candidates possess high professional qualifications and relevant experience, preferably in the judiciary.

10. In its resolution 55/159 of 12 December 2000, the General Assembly amended article 3 of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal to introduce the need for members of the Tribunal to have appropriate legal qualifications and experience. In its resolution 58/87 of 9 December 2003, the General Assembly

further amended article 3 of the Statute of the Tribunal, requiring its members to have judicial qualifications or relevant legal experience in the field of administrative law. This provision will apply as and when the new members are elected by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 3 (c)

To strengthen the secretariat of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal by the addition of a post of Deputy Secretary, in order to reduce the backlog of cases before the Tribunal.

11. This recommendation was not accepted by the Secretary-General.

Recommendation 4

(a) The present Joint Disciplinary Committee should be replaced by the Committee for Professional Responsibility with functions analogous to those of the Joint Disciplinary Committee, but with greater emphasis on the ethical, as compared to the disciplinary, aspects of its role;

(b) New members of the Joint Appeals Board and the Committee for Professional Responsibility should be provided with basic legal training;

(c) The practice of accepting the unanimous recommendations of the Joint Appeals Board and the Committee for Professional Responsibility should be revived;

(d) The secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board should publish annual reports containing information on the cases heard, as well as general statistics on the disposition of such cases;

(e) Oral hearings before all United Nations appellate bodies should be the subject of further study, with a view to ascertaining whether this modality could contribute to the settlement of disputes and speed up the disposition of cases;

(f) The use of information technology, including videoconferencing, should be increased, with the aim of facilitating the access of field-based staff to dispute-settlement instances and appellate bodies.

12. With regard to part (a) of the recommendation, the Secretary-General questions the purpose and effect of this recommendation and the General Assembly requested no action on this issue in its resolution 57/307.

13. With regard to part (b) of the recommendation, the Secretary-General continues to ensure that general legal training is provided to the Joint Appeals Board and Joint Disciplinary Committee members by their secretariat, which also advises the Board and Committee members, when they are considering specific cases, on the legal and procedural issues involved. In paragraph 13 of its resolution 57/307, the General Assembly welcomed the organization of basic legal training courses for new members of the Joint Appeals Board and the Joint Disciplinary Committee and encouraged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in this regard without additional budgetary implications.

14. With regard to part (c) of the recommendation, no change in policy has been implemented for the reasons stated in document A/55/57/Add.1. With regard to part (d) of the recommendation, the publication of reports on the outcome of the work of the Joint Appeals Board has been duly implemented. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/258, the Secretary-General has submitted three annual reports (A/56/800, A/58/300 and A/59/70) covering the periods 2000-2001, 2002 and 2003, respectively.

15. With regard to part (e) of the recommendation, the Secretary-General notes that there is no statutory prohibition against the holding of oral hearings before the Joint Appeals Board and oral hearings can be arranged when and where necessary. With regard to part (f) of the recommendation, concerning the use of information technology, including videoconferencing, the Secretary-General encourages the use of all information technology as a matter of course and on an as-needed basis.

Recommendation 5

Give further consideration to the revival of the advisory function of the International Court of Justice in the internal recourse procedure and encourage closer working relationships between the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the other major tribunals in the United Nations system, including the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal with a view to rationalizing their competence and jurisdiction and harmonizing their jurisprudence.

16. The Secretary-General stated in his comments (A/55/57/Add.1) that the function of the International Court of Justice had been, in fact, limited to requests for advisory opinions on United Nations Administrative Tribunal judgements, and that such a function had been ceased, further to a decision of the General Assembly. In resolution 55/258, the General Assembly noted the intention of the Joint Inspection Unit to continue its study on a higher appeal instance and requested it to report to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

17. The Joint Inspection Unit suggested, inter alia, in its report (A/57/441), that the General Assembly consider asking the Sixth Committee to study the desirability of establishing an ad hoc panel that would be responsible for reviewing the judgement of the existing two tribunals or a future single one. In his report (A/57/441/Add.1), the Secretary-General noted that the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) had decided, in 2001, not to pursue the introduction of a second-tier appellate mechanism. The Secretary-General also questioned the suggestion that a new ground of appeal, namely that the United Nations Administrative Tribunal had deviated from its jurisprudence, be added. This view was supported by the President of the Tribunal in his letter to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly (A/C.5/57/25) and in resolution 57/307, the General Assembly took note of the above but did not request that any action be taken on the matter.

18. With regard to the issue of the harmonization of the statutes of the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal and the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, the Secretary-General initially stated in his response to the Joint Inspection Unit recommendation contained in document A/55/57/Add.1, that such a proposal would require the General Assembly's consideration. In its resolution 55/258, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take

necessary measures to close the gap as appropriate between the statutes of the two tribunals. In resolution 57/307, the Joint Inspection Unit was requested to continue to study the possibility of harmonizing the statutes of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal for consideration by the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The comments of the Secretary-General thereon will also be presented to the General Assembly.

Recommendation 6

Reclassify the post of the Coordinator of the Office of the Coordinator of the Panel of Counsel at a senior Professional level and fill it by a staff with strong legal qualification as a first step to enhance the availability of legal advice and representation for the staff and to provide staff with the option to be represented by current, retired and staff separated by resignation and other ways.

19. The post of Coordinator was reclassified to a Professional post in 2003. The staff rules previously restricting counsel for staff appealing an administrative decision or being the object of a disciplinary proceeding to current and retired staff members were amended in accordance with resolution 57/307 (paras. 28 and 29). Currently, former staff members may also serve as counsel and staff members may also seek outside counsel at his or her own expense.

III. Delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat

20. The related Joint Inspection Unit report (A/55/857) was presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. The Advisory Committee and the Secretary-General commented upon the report in documents A/55/499 and A/55/857/Add.1, respectively. However, much of the general findings and recommendations contained in the report were deemed to have been overtaken by events and a number of reform initiatives affecting the subject matter were overlooked in the report.

21. In his report to the General Assembly (A/55/253 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General proposed several elements of an overall plan to build on the existing framework and the General Assembly took specific action on the matter in its resolution 55/258, endorsing paragraphs 22 and 23 of the Advisory Committee's report on accountability and responsibility and on management irregularities (A/55/499). As indicated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly (A/58/211), the Department of Management has launched a task force to review delegation of authority in the Organization.

Recommendation 1

The Secretary-General should present to the General Assembly a comprehensive overall plan of action for delegation of authority based on a systematically developed concept, rather than on an ad hoc approach. Such a concept should define which areas of responsibility require that authority be retained centrally and those where authority can be

delegated in the interest of a more efficient management system. As detailed in chapter V.A, such a plan of action should, inter alia, contain the elements spelled out in recommendations 2 to 11 of this report.

22. Based on action 32 of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387/Corr.1), the Department of Management initiated an assessment of delegation of authority in management areas. The assessment exercise, which took a holistic look at the definition of delegation, was participated in by all Headquarters departments and all offices away from Headquarters. As of the end of 2003, the following were its main findings: (a) programme managers are generally satisfied that delegation of authority in management areas are extensive and cover their needs well; (b) there are new areas where additional delegation might yield greater efficiency and effectiveness. A total of 25 new areas were identified by the working groups from Headquarters and the offices away from Headquarters. At this stage, appropriate processes and guidelines are being developed by the Department of Management to facilitate implementation of additional delegations; (c) it was widely felt that there is a need for sub-delegation of authority from heads of departments to the Assistant Secretaries-General, the divisional directors and subprogramme managers; and (d) the programme managers recommended that the Department of Management retain central responsibility in the following areas: (i) management of post structure; (ii) policy development in management; (iii) staff career planning, (iv) training of staff for career growth; (v) mobility policy; (vi) entitlement processing; (vii) corporate monitoring of performance in resource management; and (viii) budget.

Recommendation 2

The Secretary-General should take steps to ensure strict compliance with the procedures for the promulgation of administrative issuances (see ST/SGB/1997/1 and ST/SGB/1997/2), so as to ensure not only clarity in the formulation of procedures and instructions, but also avoidance of contradictions between administrative issuances. Issues of a binding administrative nature should be promulgated exclusively through the prescribed means.

Modifications to or cancellation of administrative issuances should only be promulgated by another administrative issuance of the same or higher rank, as amendments or revisions of the original documents.

23. The Secretariat has continued to follow the provisions of Secretary-General's bulletins ST/SGB/1997/1 and ST/SGB/1997/2 for the promulgation of administrative issuances, their abolition and amendment or revision. The Department of Management continues to work in close cooperation with the Office of Legal Affairs to ensure compliance with and respect of the principle of the hierarchy of legal norms.

Recommendation 3

The Secretary-General should review the provisions of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/151, dated 7 January 1976, entitled "Administration of the Staff Regulations and the Staff Rules", updating it as required to reflect the current situation.

Pursuant thereto, the Secretariat should promulgate one comprehensive administration instruction on the delegation of authority for the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules, so as to reflect the current situation in clear terms.

24. Considerable work has already been done on the preparation of a comprehensive instruction updating and consolidating existing instruments governing delegation of authority in respect of the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules. It will be finalized in the light of the work currently under way in the context of the implementation of action 32 of the report of the Secretary-General on reform (A/57/387 and Corr.1), to ensure consistency with the general approach governing delegation of authority.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary-General should be requested as a matter of urgency to promulgate a revised version of the Financial Regulations and Rules.

25. A revised edition of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations was promulgated in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2003/7, dated 9 May 2003, approved by the General Assembly in its decision 57/573 of 20 December 2002 and took effect as from 1 January 2003. The revised Financial Rules were effective as from 28 February 2003.

Recommendation 5

The Secretary-General should be encouraged to take additional steps towards the establishment throughout the Secretariat of a "culture" of clarity, transparency and communication, taking into account the considerations described in chapter V.B of this report.

26. The Secretary-General agrees with the recommendation. Recognizing the need for a wider and a more transparent business culture, the Under-Secretary-General for Management has initiated an institutional mechanism through which each new policy development and its subsequent promulgation is vetted through a network of management and administrative officials from the global secretariat. In most departments and offices in the offices away from Headquarters programme managers have been conducting regular staff and town hall meetings involving staff from all levels to keep them abreast of new developments within the department and the organization. The Secretary-General himself broadcasts directly to the staff on major international issues and on policy matters. However, there is still room for improvement in this regard and systematic efforts will be made to continue the change towards a culture of transparency, clarity and communication.

Recommendation 6

The Secretary-General should institute the requirements that the delegation of authority to individuals should be clearly defined in individual delegation orders, in addition to the general delegation that may be included in the Staff Rules, the Financial Rules or the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation

or in Secretary-General's bulletins related to the organization of the Secretariat.

27. The current practice of delegation varies throughout the organization. It is done on a personal level, as in the cases of financial delegation, on a post level as in the case of human resources management, and on a level that is a mixture of person and post in the case of central services. While delegation in financial authority is in full compliance with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/213/Rev.1, there is a need to streamline other delegation mechanisms and processes. The Department of Management is addressing these issues and will strive to achieve consistency in the application of delegation of authority to individuals. In administrative instruction ST/AI/2004/1, dated 8 March 2004, the Under-Secretary-General for Management issued a comprehensive new delegation of authority under the new Financial Regulations and Rules. The officials to whom this authority was delegated have issued further delegations, as appropriate.

Recommendation 7

In addition to the general training available to the Secretariat as a whole, managers to whom authority is to be delegated should be empowered through the provision of specialized training and briefings and with adequate support services. Furthermore, the Secretary-General should direct the central administrative services to guarantee to managers, upon their request, the availability of additional guidance as to the correct implementation and interpretation of financial, staff and programme planning regulations, rules and administrative instructions.

28. The Secretary-General endorses the principles enshrined in the recommendation. As a first step, the Secretariat has refined the requirements for managerial competencies in the vacancy announcement process and also in the selection of senior staff. Currently, the Department of Management is preparing a reference guide for senior managers on the use of delegation instruments, which should be released in early 2005. Effective 2005, there is also a plan to introduce a mandatory induction and training package for managerial appointees to cover human resources, financial management, and procurement. Further consideration will be given to introducing refresher training for managers to update their knowledge in administrative procedures and reinforce their managerial competencies.

Recommendation 8

The Secretary-General should undertake all efforts to optimize the functioning of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) and the Intranet, both at Headquarters and in the field, so as to ensure constant and immediate access by managers to relevant information for the proper implementation of delegated authority.

29. The Secretary-General agrees with the recommendation. Systematic efforts have been made for the past several years to gradually implement IMIS at all duty stations, including the field missions of peacekeeping operations. IMIS is the key organizational tool that is used by the global secretariat for business process management relating to finance and human resources. However, there are other management tools, such as the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation

Information System and the Key Item Management Reporting System, which have been instituted for managers to secure real-time information in line with their delegated responsibilities.

Recommendation 9

The Secretary-General should ensure that the central administrative units retain an ongoing monitoring capacity through which they may gauge progress and detect possible deficiencies in the exercise by managers of delegated authority. To this end, it is essential to develop adequate information technologies and systems, as well as cooperation with pertinent oversight mechanisms.

30. Steps will be taken to ensure that the central administrative units retain an ongoing monitoring capacity. In this regard, significant progress has been achieved in several areas, including human resources action plans and the development of an Internet-based monitoring system; improved monitoring capacity of staff selection decisions provided by the electronically based Galaxy system and procurement services have initiated a real-time web-based system that enables the staff of the office, as well as its clients, to monitor the status of online procurement action. Further refinements of centralized monitoring systems will continue throughout the Secretariat.

Recommendation 10

The Secretary-General's effort to develop a comprehensive system of accountability should be based on the following principles: (a) managers should be provided with all necessary support, information and guidance; (b) adequate mechanisms should exist for the evaluation of performance and the strengthening of enforcement mechanisms to deal with cases of failure; and (c) performance indicators should be accompanied by measures to ensure that unsatisfactory achievements and non-compliance with work programmes or the Organization's policies, regulations and rules are taken into account in evaluating managers, shaping their careers and deciding on the level of authority that can be delegated to them.

31. The Secretary-General continues to strengthen the system of accountability outlined in his report on accountability and responsibility (A/55/270), taking into consideration the principles outlined above. Improvements in the provision of information, support and clarification have already been referred to in relation to recommendations 8 and 9 above.

32. The annual review of programme managers' performance in relation to the compact between the Secretary-General and each head of department has been strengthened by the introduction of the executive information report on management, which includes performance indicators relating to key financial and human resource management and the implementation of audit recommendations. The human resources action plan provides another mechanism of monitoring performance of delegated authority. When issuing financial delegation, past performance is carefully evaluated and brought to bear on the level of authority delegated. The effectiveness and relevance of the Accountability Panel, which was created in 2001 (see ST/SGB/2000/14 dated 23 October 2000) as the highest body responsible for addressing major managerial failures and identifying systemic

problems in the Organization, is being reviewed to make it a robust accountability institution.

Recommendation 11

The Secretary-General should ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, the views and suggestions of the staff are considered, and that full and meaningful consultations with staff representatives are undertaken in the context of the improved system of communication within the Secretariat.

33. The Secretary-General has always been willing to engage the staff in constructive and results-oriented dialogue. Unfortunately, the consultation process with staff representatives has suffered from a number of difficulties, which led to the temporary suspension of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee mechanism in 2003. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure that these difficulties are resolved in the near future and that the full consultation process resumes.

IV. Results-based budgeting: the experience of the United Nations system organizations

34. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/54/287) was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/205, in which the Assembly requested the Joint Inspection Unit to undertake an analytical and comparative study of the experience of the bodies of the United Nations system that were implementing an approach similar to results-based budgeting. The Secretary-General presented his comments on the Joint Inspection Unit report in document A/54/287/Add.1. Below is an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit.

Recommendation 1

In order to assure appropriate guidance from Member States in resolving the problem of the lack of agreed definitions for key results-based budgeting terms, the glossary of financial and budgetary terms should be reviewed and commented upon by the appropriate bodies of the United Nations system organizations.

35. In annexes I and II of his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456), the Secretary-General provided a clearer definition of relevant terms, as well as suggested guidelines for programme managers in the formulation of objectives and expected accomplishments.

Recommendation 2

As a means for seeking to resolve existing concerns about the possible adaptation of results-based budgeting to the United Nations, and in order to ensure an appropriate participatory role of Member States in adapting results-based budgeting to the United Nations, an open-ended working group should be established at the level of the Fifth Committee, to meet as needed, within existing resource levels, at which secretariat officials, would provide briefings and respond to questions on all aspects of results-based budgeting.

36. The Secretary-General convened a retreat on results-based budgeting for Fifth Committee members from 18 to 20 September 2003. The retreat was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, with support from the Permanent Missions of Australia, the Netherlands and South Africa to the United Nations and from the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships. Presentations were given by experts from Australia, the Netherlands, South Africa and Sweden, as well as by representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Management, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization. The retreat provided an opportunity for informal discussions and conversations about matters related to results-based budgeting and results-based management at the United Nations.

37. The Secretary-General also convened a retreat, from 10 to 12 June 2004, for members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination just prior to its forty-fourth session. Presentations were given by an expert from Denmark and also by representatives from the various departments and offices at United Nations Headquarters. The objective of the retreat was to facilitate deliberations and decision-making on matters related to the application of results-based budgeting concepts in the context of the Committee's review of the strategic framework for the period 2006-2007.

Recommendation 3

Subject to the General Assembly decision to use results-based budgeting for the United Nations, the United Nations System Staff College and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should be invited to conduct seminars and workshops to help to familiarize staff and representatives of Member States with results-based budgeting.

38. The Department of Management, at the request of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, has provided annual briefings to the Fifth Committee on the budgetary process of the United Nations, including results-based budgeting and results-based management.

Recommendation 4

Future reporting from the Secretary-General on results-based budgeting should include a comprehensive assessment of changes that would be required to assure the readiness of the Organization for results-based budgeting with regard to areas such as regulations, procedures, management information systems and training.

39. The Secretary-General took this recommendation into account in preparing his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456). Paragraphs 64 to 73 of that report provide a description of changes or conditions necessary for the implementation of the results-based budgeting elements. The Secretary-General also submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session an interim report on results-based budgeting for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/57/478), in which he discussed the experience gained and lessons learned, the logical framework, data collection, data-collection methods, information systems, analysis and reporting procedures, as well as issues regarding monitoring and evaluation, benchmarking, help-desk functions, web sites, training and coaching. The Office of Internal Oversight Services also

submitted a report to the General Assembly on implementation of all provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/231 of 23 December 2000 on results-based budgeting (A/57/474). The General Assembly, in its decision 57/575 of 20 December 2002, took note of both reports and endorsed the approach taken therein.

40. Reporting on results-based budgeting was also done in the introduction of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budgets for the bienniums 2002-2003 and 2004-2005 (A/56/6 (Introduction) and A/58/6 (Introduction)). In part one of the strategic framework for the period 2006-2007 (A/59/6 (part one)), an explanation was also given on results-based budgeting concepts with respect to the structure and format of the framework, legislative mandates and collective responsibility, definitions and lessons learned.

Recommendation 5

Reflecting the uncertainty about how to reflect external factors in the accountability of programme managers under results-based budgeting, the Secretary-General should submit to the General Assembly as soon as possible a report containing recommendations on the matter, accompanied by the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

41. In paragraphs 32 and 33 of his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456), the Secretary-General focused on the question of external factors and has taken the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit into account in his analysis and reporting to the General Assembly.

Recommendation 6

In view of their roles in the current programme budget process, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee should be invited to comment on their respective roles under results-based budgeting.

42. The Secretary-General has taken note of the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit. He provided a description of the expected changes in the review and approval process of the programme budget in paragraphs 57 to 59 of his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456). The Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee, in their review of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budgets, continue to provide comments and suggestions for improving the implementation of results-based budgeting, particularly with respect to application of the logical framework in relation to objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. They have also addressed the question of adequate monitoring and evaluation procedures.

V. Young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention

43. The objective of the JIU report (A/55/798) was to compare and analyse policies and practices with regard to the recruitment and management of entry-level professionals, with a view to making recommendations as to ways to prepare and retain a cadre of dedicated and competent professionals.

44. The main recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit include inter alia, specific efforts to reduce the age at recruitment for junior Professional posts, more careful monitoring of trends on separations, set up a structure to assist the integration of young professionals, increase opportunities for them to be assigned both at Headquarters and in the field; improve career development for them and facilitate spousal employment. The report was considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session as part of the larger agenda item of human resources reforms and some of the Joint Inspection Unit recommendations were taken into account by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/258.

Recommendation 1

Secretariats should undertake specific efforts to reduce the age at recruitment for all Professional posts, and for P-1 to P-3 posts in particular.

The United Nations Secretariat may wish to review the adequacy of the age limit presently imposed for national competitive recruitment examination candidates.

45. The Secretary-General agreed that efforts should be made overall to reduce the age of recruitment, keeping in mind that requirements must be tailored to the needs of each organization, especially as the national competitive examination is not the primary mode of selecting junior professionals in every organization. For the reasons provided in document A/55/798/Add.1, however, the imposition of a reduced age limit on candidates for the national competitive examination was accepted by the General Assembly. Alternatively, it was accepted that the current age limit for the examination should be maintained and that the Secretariat would ensure that the placement of qualified candidates is sped up once the examination is completed. The United Nations Secretariat has introduced new guidelines for determination of both the level and step on recruitment to the Professional category.

Recommendation 2

Trends concerning separations of Professional staff in the United Nations system should be more carefully monitored through:

(a) **The inclusion by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) in its annual publication, entitled "Personnel Statistics" of data on separation of Professional staff by grade and type of separation;**

(b) The design of exit questionnaires to better identify causes of resignations. Such questionnaires may be completed or replaced by structured exit interviews.

46. The organizations of the United Nations system all agreed that the use of structured exit questionnaires provides a sound basis for capturing data and analysing separations systematically. In that regard, the Secretariat has developed and distributed the appropriate questionnaire to all departments and is considering the most efficient ways of capturing the data electronically, as well as of ensuring that the questionnaire is completed in all cases. Once all organizations have captured and electronically stored these findings in their databases, the information will then be stored and analysed in the CEB common system database.

Recommendation 3

Secretariats of all organizations concerned should speed up recruitment processes by imposing strict deadlines for the review of applications by managers and the placement of candidates.

47. Organizations throughout the system have implemented proactive approaches to their recruitment processes. While some organizations have implemented deadline-oriented methods, the United Nations Secretariat is of the view that the imposition of strict deadlines may reduce the Organization's flexibility in recruiting the right persons at the right time and in the right place. Nevertheless, the Secretariat has taken several recent measures to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of all recruitment processes, such as the increased use of electronic communications, including online applications; monitoring and tracking of applications; development of generic job profiles; early identification of workforce needs; simplification of placement processes and use of rosters. These measures have resulted in an appreciable reduction in recruitment time for young professionals.

Recommendation 4

Further efforts should be undertaken by the Secretariat to accelerate the placement of successful national competitive recruitment examination candidates, reduce the number of candidates presently on the roster and optimize the use of this roster, through:

(a) Strengthening linkages among human resources planning, examinations and staffing, which should be conducted as an integrated process, rather than as separate operations;

(b) Submitting proposals to the General Assembly to further contain the number of candidates on the roster, such as time limitations on its validity or the automatic suspension of the examination in occupational groups for which the roster exceeds a predetermined number of candidates;

(c) Sharing the roster with other organizations, especially for common occupational fields.

48. The United Nations Secretariat is continuing its efforts to accelerate the placement of successful national competitive recruitment examination candidates.

Planning, examinations and staffing are being integrated into a continuous process, inter alia, through departmental human resources action plans. The roster of successful candidates is an essential and integral part of the recruitment process and, in the view of the Secretariat, should not be administratively restricted beyond the regulations currently in force. The Secretariat agrees to pursue the sharing of this roster with other organizations, and welcomes the possibility that this will accord with the widening of their recruitment networks; however, it must be kept in mind that each organization must meet its own recruitment requirements and procedures.

49. Currently there exists a mechanism for suspension of examinations in occupational groups with large rosters. The number of candidates in each roster and the projected number of vacancies in each occupational group are reviewed annually prior to the determination of the groups to be offered in the next examination. As a result, examinations are offered for only those occupational groups with small rosters which cannot meet the demands of the Organization for the following two years. Limiting the validity of the roster may be detrimental to candidates in highly specialized groups in which not many vacancies occur. Instead, the placing of the candidates at higher levels could be considered, should they have the required experience.

Recommendation 5

The General Assembly may wish to call upon Member States to cooperate more effectively in the organization of the examination and, in particular, in its publicity. The Secretary-General could also include in regular reports on human resources management examples of good practices in this regard.

50. While this recommendation is primarily addressed to the United Nations Secretariat, all organizations recognize the instrumental role that Member States can play in widely disseminating information on employment opportunities and upholding the principles laid down in Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. Organizations would also welcome the sharing of experiences and best practices of Member States regarding the integration, orientation and development of staff. The United Nations Secretariat has always responded and will continue to respond to specific publicity requests from Member States to disseminate the information. Specifically, the Office of Human Resources Management has cooperated with Member States in the preparation of information sessions and presentations both at Headquarters and abroad. Most recently, and in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, the Office of Human Resources Management produced video support for publicity specifically tailored to the needs of a given Member State.

Recommendation 6

Secretariats that have not done so should set up structures to assist with the successful integration of young professionals during their first months through:

- (a) Clearly identifying focal points in substantive departments to assist new recruits with all practical problems;

(b) Designing appropriate orientation courses for the young professionals;

(c) Instituting mentoring programmes whereby more senior officers can advise young professionals on substantive and career issues.

51. Organizations have recognized the importance of orientation and induction programmes in order for new officials at all levels to perform effectively, and efficiently, as well as to create a shared understanding of an organization's vision and culture. Zero nominal growth has somewhat handicapped organizations' capacity to take large initiatives in this regard; nonetheless, a number of pilot orientation and mentoring programmes are being instituted at the organizational level and CEB has supported the development of a common system orientation training programme through the United Nations System Staff College.

52. With regard to the successful integration of junior professionals during their first months of service, all major established offices have identified focal points for national competitive examination recruitment, placement and orientation and the Special Orientation and Development Professional Programme for Junior Professionals, introduced in 1996, is now being offered four times a year. Owing to efficient scheduling and operations, the average waiting time for a new Professional to attend the programme in New York has been reduced from 8 months in 2000/01 to four months in 2002/03. The programmes will continue to be offered at the same rate to achieve the target average waiting time of less than three months.

Recommendation 7

Secretariats of organizations concerned should offer the opportunity to junior professional staff members to pursue studies and research in fields of relevance to their work by making them eligible sooner for study leave or by instituting new part-time study schemes.

53. The provision of developmental opportunities is generally recognized as an important element in attracting and retaining a quality workforce. Such opportunities must be managed within budgetary constraints and in the light of an organization's projected skill/competence requirements.

Recommendation 8

Secretariats of organizations concerned should increase opportunities for young professionals to be assigned both at Headquarters and in the field in the course of their first five or six years. The Secretariat of the United Nations, in particular, should further improve career development for young professionals. In due course, it should assess the impact of its managed reassignment programme to ensure that it facilitates mobility, not only between departments, but also between duty stations and that it contributes to upward as well as lateral mobility.

54. Organizations recognize that mobility offers an opportunity to enhance the flexibility of its workforce by providing staff with on-the-job learning experiences through which to develop a broader understanding of the work of an organization as well as new skills. It should be recalled that a number of organizations have no programmatic need for geographical mobility. The United Nations Secretariat has introduced as part of the new staff selection system, a managed reassignment

programme, which has been administered by the Office of Human Resources Management over the past two years. During that period, 111 candidates recruited between 1 January 2000 and 31 August 2001 were eligible for participation. The programme has proved to be a good career development tool for young professionals — staff moved between departments, duty stations and occupation groups. The largest number of eligible participants moved within their own departments, 37 staff (33 per cent); 29 (26 per cent) moved to a higher level post, 28 (25 per cent) participated in managed reassignment programmes and changed departments and duty stations; 5 staff members (5 per cent) went on peacekeeping assignments. A growing number of staff (4) took special leave between their first and second years for advanced studies and research in the fields relevant to their work.

Recommendation 9

Managers in the organizations concerned should devote sufficient time and attention to the development of their junior staff. Appraisals of the way in which they discharge this responsibility should be an integral part of their performance evaluation.

55. Organizations' management development programmes and performance appraisal systems are increasingly emphasizing the importance of the supervisors' and managers' role in supporting effective people management and development, regardless of age group. This is evidenced, for example, in competency frameworks, such as those of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organization.

56. Primary responsibility for the timely implementation of the performance appraisal of individual staff members rests with the supervisor, who is held accountable in his or her own performance appraisal for managing performance and empowering others. The system includes the supervisor's setting the yearly work plan, the selection of the competencies to be demonstrated, the setting of the learning and career development plan with the individual staff members and then the provision of ongoing feedback, mid-point review and final appraisal.

Recommendation 10

Efforts to facilitate spousal employment should be undertaken as follows: (a) The setting up of joint family-career transition programmes in secretariats at major duty stations; (b) governing bodies of organizations that still forbid spousal employment should rescind this restriction by amending the relevant staff regulations; (c) the General Assembly should renew its call to Governments in host countries to consider granting work permits for spouses accompanying staff members and monitor the implementation of relevant resolutions.

57. As stated in the former Administrative Committee on Coordination (now CEB) policy statement, entitled "Work/family agenda", organizations of the United Nations common system are committed to introducing — as best fits each organization's structure and mandate — supportive measures to enhance employment opportunities for staff members' partners. To this end, the Participating Agencies Mobility System was introduced. The system provides staff members and their partners with a simple electronic means over the Internet of bringing their

career aspirations to the attention of any other agency anywhere in the world. A feasibility study to extend the system (phase II) with the introduction of a searchable database and the inclusion of a broader array of international organizations will be undertaken in the third quarter of 2001.

58. Some progress has been made in the complex area of support for spousal employment, including the development of spouse support networks in many duty stations. In New York, for example, spouses of staff members who recently came to the duty station are being invited by the Office of Human Resources Management to information sessions to acclimatize themselves better to the location, to provide them with tools to find work in the labour market and to encourage them to form self-help networks. However, the issue of spousal employment remains a major concern of staff and constitutes a significant obstacle to staff mobility.

59. The United Nations has joined partnerjob.com on a trial basis. This non-governmental organization provides a database where jobs by member organizations and curricula vitae of spouses and partners can be posted. Other members of partnerjob.com are large international companies, international organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank and the European Space Agency, and other United Nations organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Organizations systemwide strongly support efforts to encourage host Governments to consider granting work permits for spouses accompanying staff members.



General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth session

Item 115 of the provisional agenda*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of
the United Nations

**Letter dated 10 September 2004 from the Secretary-General to the
President of the General Assembly**

1. At present 13 Member States are in arrears under the terms of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states as follows:

"A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member."

2. The minimum payments necessary to reduce the amounts owed by those Member States on their contributions so that they remain below the gross amount assessed for the preceding two full years (2002 and 2003) are as follows:

<i>Member State</i>	<i>Minimum payment (United States dollars)</i>
Central African Republic	319 948.00
Chad	9 333.00
Comoros	744 450.00
Georgia	5 968 712.49
Guinea-Bissau	459 550.00
Iraq	14 519 57*
Liberia	1 110 215.00
Malawi	6 715.00
Niger	338 087.69
Republic of Moldova	1 299 635.00

* A/59/150.



<i>Member State</i>	<i>Minimum payment (United States dollars)</i>
Sao Tome and Principe	562 555.00
Somalia	990 955.00
Tajikistan	1 252 174.00

(Signed) Kofi Annan
Secretary-General



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Items 8 and 114 of the provisional agenda*

**Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and
allocation of items: reports of the General Committee**

Pattern of conferences

Letter dated 9 September 2004 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I am writing in connection with the provisions of section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, according to which no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly. Those subsidiary organs that wish to meet during a regular session of the Assembly submit their requests through the Committee on Conferences.

I wish to inform you that the Committee on Conferences has received requests from the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Population Fund, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Disarmament Commission, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to meet in New York during the main part of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The Committee on Conferences, having carefully considered those requests and the reasons for them, does not object, on the strict understanding that such meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, so that the activities of the General Assembly itself are not adversely affected. The chairpersons of those bodies will also be informed of the statistics relating to their utilization of conference services in the past. If the benchmark figure of 80 per cent

* A/59/150.



was not reached in the previous year, the Committee on Conferences will express its concern and make proposals for improvement.

Accordingly, I should be grateful if the General Assembly would explicitly authorize the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Population Fund, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, the Disarmament Commission, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to meet in accordance with their requests, subject to the conditions referred to in the foregoing paragraph.

(Signed) Enno Drogenik
Chairman
Committee on Conferences



General Assembly

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Agenda items 8 and 112

**Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and
allocation of items: reports of the General Committee**

Pattern of conferences

Letter dated 27 September 2004 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to the President of the General Assembly

I am writing in connection with the provisions of section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, according to which no subsidiary organ of the Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly. Those subsidiary organs that wish to meet during a regular session of the Assembly submit their requests through the Committee on Conferences.

I wish to inform you that the Committee on Conferences has received a request from the Administrative Tribunal to meet in New York during the main part of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The Committee on Conferences, having carefully considered the request and the reasons for it, does not object, on the strict understanding that such meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services so that the activities of the General Assembly itself are not adversely affected, and that every effort would be made to make the most efficient use of conference services.

Accordingly, I should be grateful if the General Assembly would explicitly authorize the Administrative Tribunal to meet in accordance with its request, subject to the conditions referred to in the foregoing paragraph.

(Signed) Enno Drogenik
Chairman
Committee on Conferences



**General Assembly**

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Fifty-ninth session

Item 107 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Human rights situations: human rights situations and reports
of special rapporteurs and representatives**

Situation of human rights in Burundi**Note by the Secretariat**

1. In its resolution 2004/82, approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2004/224, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights to appoint an independent expert to consider the situation of human rights in Burundi and ensure that the authorities are honouring the commitments they have made. The independent expert was requested to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to report to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-first session.

2. In July 2004, the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights appointed Mr. Akich Okola as independent expert on the situation of human rights in Burundi. Owing to his late appointment, Mr. Okola will not be in a position to submit a report to the Assembly as requested. Instead, the independent expert will report orally to the Assembly on his initial observations with respect to his mandate.

* A/59/150.





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Item 107 (a) of the provisional agenda*

Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

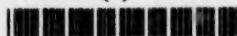
United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture**

Note by the Secretariat

In accordance with the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/151, the Secretary-General submits an annual report to the General Assembly on the operations of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. The Secretary-General will not submit his annual report on the activities of the Fund to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session because the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Fund has been postponed to 4 to 8 October 2004. A comprehensive report will be submitted to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

* A/59/150.

** The present note is submitted late because the members of the Board of Trustees were appointed only on 4 August 2004.



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Item 55 of the provisional agenda*

Strengthening of the United Nations system

**Report of the Secretary-General in response to the report of
the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil
Society Relations**

Executive summary

The present report has been prepared in response to the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (A/58/817 and Corr.1). It offers comments on some of the Panel's recommendations from the perspective of the United Nations Secretariat and, in some cases, makes specific suggestions regarding their implementation, which the General Assembly may wish to take into account.

The Secretary-General commends the report of the Panel to the attention of the General Assembly. Expanding and deepening the relationship with non-governmental organizations will further strengthen both the United Nations and the intergovernmental debates on issues of global importance. The Panel makes a compelling case for the United Nations to become a more outward-looking organization. Another important theme is the need for the United Nations to "connect the global with the local". Building on the Panel's proposals, the present report makes a number of concrete suggestions and actions in connection with increasing the participation of non-governmental organizations in intergovernmental bodies, the accreditation process, improving the involvement of non-governmental organizations from developing countries and strengthening of the institutional capacity of the United Nations for engagement with non-governmental organizations.

* A/59/150.



I. Introduction

1. My report of two years ago, "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1), reflected on the growing importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹ to the work of the United Nations:

"The expanding worldwide networks of non-governmental organizations embrace virtually every level of organization, from the village community to global summits, and almost every sector of public life, from the provision of microcredit and the delivery of emergency relief supplies, to environmental and human rights activism".

2. As I pointed out in that report, the relationship between the United Nations and NGOs is as old as the Charter itself. Yet the system for facilitating this interaction needs to be strengthened. This is why I appointed, in February 2003, a panel of eminent persons, chaired by the former President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The Panel has worked diligently over the past year — taking stock of existing practice, consulting widely with interested parties and proposing better ways of managing United Nations-civil society relations. The Panel's report (see A/58/817 and Corr.1) was launched on 21 June 2004 and contains 30 specific proposals for reform and improvement.

3. At the outset, it is important to stress that the United Nations is and will remain an intergovernmental organization at which decisions are taken by its Member States. The Panel's valuable suggestions can be taken in the context of the ongoing process of modernization and institutional change that the Organization has undergone in the past decade. Expanding and deepening the relationship with NGOs will further strengthen both the institution and the intergovernmental debate. This is an opportunity for the United Nations to enhance its impact in a world that is remarkably different from the one in which it was founded nearly 60 years ago.

4. In its very first proposal, the Panel argues convincingly that the United Nations should become a more outward-looking organization, making more of its role as a global convenor of diverse constituencies relevant to an issue. I fully agree that expanding United Nations consultations with different constituencies and facilitating their input into relevant debates of global significance can only enhance the quality and depth of policy analysis and actionable outcomes, including in the form of partnerships. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can help the United Nations to devise innovative answers to critical questions. In the same way, the deliberations of United Nations meetings can become richer and more diverse, yet grounded in reality. More effective engagement with NGOs also increases the likelihood that United Nations decisions will be better understood and supported by a broad and diverse public.

5. Another important theme of the Panel's report, which I welcome, is the need for the United Nations to "connect the global with the local". The Millennium Development Goals have been instrumental in bringing cohesion to the functioning of the United Nations system at the country level and in aligning its operations with the development agenda emerging from the major United Nations conferences and

¹ For the purposes of the present document, the term "non-governmental organization" is used in accordance with traditional United Nations parlance, consistent with the reference made in Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations.

summit meetings. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will depend on a collaborative approach made possible through partnerships with Governments and NGOs on the ground. Focusing attention on the Goals also provides an opportunity for local country-level realities to impact on global deliberations.

6. I commend the report of the Panel to the attention of the General Assembly and express the hope that its recommendations will receive the careful and positive consideration that they deserve. The present report offers comments on some of the Panel's recommendations from the perspective of the United Nations Secretariat and, in some cases, makes specific suggestions regarding their implementation, which the Assembly may wish to take into account. The report is structured around the following seven headings:

- Increasing the participation of NGOs in intergovernmental bodies;
- Establishing a trust fund to increase the participation of representatives of NGOs from developing countries;
- Improving the accreditation;
- Improving the United Nations Secretariat's dialogue with NGOs;
- Enhancing country-level engagement with NGOs;
- Exploring the enlargement of the Partnerships Office;
- Managing the change process.

II. Increasing the participation of non-governmental organizations in intergovernmental bodies

7. The participation of NGOs in intergovernmental bodies has dramatically increased in recent years, particularly as a result of and during the major international conferences and their 5-year and 10-year reviews. NGOs are now commonly present at the intergovernmental deliberations of many of the organizations of the United Nations system and participate in a broad range of advisory mechanisms and partnerships. A variety of modalities for NGO participation have been developed over the past 15 years.

8. The extent to which NGOs are able to organize themselves around broad networks focusing on specific issues will have a bearing on the form and impact of their involvement in the work of the Organization. There have been many examples in the past of such successful networks, the existence of which has greatly facilitated the consultative process. I welcome proposal 23 in the Panel's report, which stresses that the main constituencies of NGOs should themselves take steps to form groups or broad networks for participation in United Nations activities. Such groups would make it much easier to conduct the issue-based, multi-constituency processes which the Panel recommends in proposal 5.

A. General Assembly

9. The General Assembly and its main committees have increasingly involved NGOs in their deliberations, both informally, through round-table meetings and panel discussions, and formally, through invitations to the special sessions and

conferences convened under its auspices, and, more recently, through the biennial high-level dialogue. Thus, the Assembly is already moving to some extent in the direction described in proposal 6.

10. I share the view expressed by the Panel, however, that the Organization would benefit from extending and standardizing these practices, so that they become a regular component of the General Assembly's work. For example, prior to major events, the Assembly could institute the practice of holding interactive hearings between Member States and NGO representatives that have the necessary expertise on the issues on the agenda. In the coming year, such a hearing could be "piloted" before the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS, which is to be held on 2 June 2005. Views could be shared on the progress made in implementing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.²

11. The General Assembly could also agree to convene a two-day, informal, interactive hearing with NGOs prior to the opening of the Assembly each year, centred around an agenda to be determined in consultations among the President of the Assembly, the Bureau of the Assembly and NGO representatives. This practice could be initiated on a trial basis for the sixtieth session of the Assembly and evaluated after five years, to coincide with the 10-year review of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

12. Questions regarding accreditation and the rights and responsibilities pertaining to NGO participation in the General Assembly are discussed in section IV of the present report.

B. Security Council

13. In proposal 12, the Panel encouraged the Security Council to increase its contact with NGOs. The Council has taken a number of steps in that direction in recent years. There has been more frequent recourse to the Arria formula³ for consultations with NGOs. In 2004 alone, the Council has invited NGO representatives and the business sector to participate in two open debates: one on the role of business in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building and the other on the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building. Also, Security Council members, during their recent mission to West Africa, interacted extensively with key NGO constituencies throughout the mission.

14. I encourage the Security Council to find ways to strengthen further its relationship with civil society. Additional funding could be made available from either the trust fund referred to in section III of the present report or from United Nations country teams to increase the participation of NGO actors from the field in the meetings of the Council. I have also noted the Panel's recommendation that independent commissions of inquiry be established after Council-mandated operations. I believe that such a formal mechanism could be reserved for special cases. The Council may wish, however, to adopt the practice of conducting some form of assessment, with input from selected NGOs, following the completion of each peace mission.

² General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex.

³ Informal meetings called and hosted by one of the members of the Security Council with one or more NGO or other experts, but with no minutes.

C. Economic and Social Council

15. In recent years, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions have significantly intensified their involvement of civil society, including accredited NGOs, foundations, parliamentarians and local authorities, and with the private sector. This has enriched the proceedings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. The Council has launched several successful multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force. Likewise, the Commission on Sustainable Development engaged civil society representatives throughout its review session of 2004. This practice could be emulated in other subsidiary bodies of the Council and by the Council itself.

D. Parliamentarians

16. The engagement of parliamentarians in the work of the United Nations has taken many forms over the years. Their participation in national delegations and through various parliamentary organizations has helped bring the Organization closer to citizens and their elected representatives. The Inter-Parliamentary Union has played a particularly active role in fostering a more sustained interaction between the United Nations and parliamentarians, a role which was recognized by the General Assembly when it granted the Union the status of observer.

17. I agree that more should be done to strengthen the Organization's links to parliaments and parliamentarians. Proposals 13 to 16 identify a number of steps, which I commend to the attention of the General Assembly. As an initial step, it may also wish to organize or support meetings of parliamentarians, in 2005, to discuss the issues before the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS, which is to be held on 2 June 2005. In addition, the Assembly may wish to recommend, organize or support meetings of parliamentarians at the national, regional or global levels early in 2006, to provide input to the meeting to review the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, scheduled for later in that year. With experience, such meetings could evolve into the global public policy forums mentioned in proposal 15.

E. Local authorities

18. The United Nations has always interacted with local authorities as key partners, especially on development and humanitarian work at the local level. For most of the world's population, it is their local authority that has most direct influence on their lives in areas such as water and sanitation, education and health services. In the past decade, global networks of local authorities have been created, most notably the United Cities and Local Governments, which greatly facilitate the dialogue of organized local authorities with the United Nations and other international forums. Moreover, the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities was established in 2000 to strengthen the international dialogue with local authorities on development issues, especially in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

19. The direct participation of local authorities in the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has also been broadened. This is a welcome trend, and I encourage Member States to continue

facilitating the participation of local authorities and their associations in intergovernmental bodies. Again, if the General Assembly decides to hold a hearing before the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS, it may wish to invite local authorities and their associations. The United Nations will continue to explore opportunities to strengthen engagement with local authorities, especially through the work of UN-Habitat, and also through the United Nations country teams and other parts of the broader United Nations system.

III. Establishing a trust fund to increase the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations from developing countries

20. As highlighted in the Panel's report, the increase in the participation of NGOs in intergovernmental bodies is rather unbalanced: NGOs from developing countries are underrepresented. This is partly a result of the lack of resources of NGOs from developing countries to cover travel and accommodation costs. At the same time, I am encouraged to note that the number of developing country NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council has increased in the past decade. For example, African-based NGOs now make up 11 per cent of the total — up from 4 per cent in 1996. Overall, 30 per cent of NGOs in consultative status with the Council have their headquarters in the developing world, partly as a result of the Secretariat's efforts.

21. The participation of developing country representatives in the recent global conferences has been assisted by generous support from a series of conference-specific trust funds. Such a fund does not exist, however, to finance participation in the Economic and Social Council, its subsidiary bodies and other intergovernmental meetings. Consequently, the level of attendance of NGO representatives from developing countries in standing United Nations meetings is low.

22. I will create a single trust fund that will provide financial support for the travel and accommodation of representatives of accredited NGOs from developing countries to attend intergovernmental meetings, in accordance with proposal 27 of the Panel. Existing trust funds which support participation in specific intergovernmental processes would be subsumed into the new fund. A detailed cost plan, criteria for support and procedures for administering the fund will be developed in consultation with stakeholders. I encourage Member States to contribute generously to this fund.

IV. Improving accreditation

23. In its report, the Panel makes a number of recommendations regarding NGO accreditation. To summarize, the Panel proposes that:

- (a) NGOs be accredited to participate in the work of the General Assembly;
- (b) A single accreditation process be established for all United Nations forums;
- (c) A committee of the General Assembly be given the responsibility to review all NGO applications for accreditation;

(d) The process of accreditation be streamlined;

(e) The rights and responsibilities pertaining to NGO participation be reviewed and harmonized.

24. I would like to offer the following comments and suggestions under each of these headings.

A. Granting non-governmental organizations accreditation to participate in the work of the General Assembly

25. Article 71 of the Charter provides that the Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with NGOs which are concerned with matters within its competence. There is nothing in Article 71 that would preclude the General Assembly from inviting NGOs to participate in its sessions and its work. There is considerable merit in opening the regular work of the Assembly to increased participation by accredited NGOs. This is already taking place informally through panels, round-table meetings, and NGO involvement in the preparatory work of the international conferences, the special sessions and high-level dialogue of the Assembly. One possible option could be to start with accreditation to the main committees, leaving for consideration at a subsequent stage the question of accreditation to the plenary. If the Assembly decides in favour of accrediting NGOs to its main committees, the rights and responsibilities pertaining to participation would then need to be defined.

B. Establishing a single system of accreditation

26. A single system of NGO accreditation for all United Nations intergovernmental bodies, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and conferences, based on one set of agreed-upon criteria, would have the benefit of simplicity, consistency and efficiency, as is well argued in the Panel's report. It would also facilitate the involvement of NGOs in the consideration of complex issues whose ramifications span many intergovernmental organs.

27. Concerning the Panel's proposal to consolidate the Economic and Social Council and Department of Public Information processes, closer examination reveals that there is an important distinction to be made between the accreditation process, governing the relationship between NGOs and intergovernmental bodies, and the association process, which grants NGOs the right to access United Nations documents, facilities and communication materials. One is clearly an intergovernmental process while the other is not. There does not seem to be much merit in attempting to consolidate either the processes or the internal United Nations structures that handle them.

C. A committee of the General Assembly responsible for all applications for accreditation

28. While Article 71 allows the Economic and Social Council to make suitable arrangements for consultation with NGOs, the Charter does not designate a specific mechanism or body for the accreditation of NGOs. Moreover, while pursuant to Council resolution 3 (II) of 21 June 1946, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations is the intergovernmental organ designated to consider applications for consultative status with the Council, the Assembly, if it so decides, could adopt and assume responsibility for a single accreditation system. An existing committee of the General Assembly, perhaps the General Committee, could be designated for this purpose.

D. Streamlining the accreditation process

29. Whether or not Member States decide to accept the three changes outlined above, a number of procedural changes could be made which would significantly improve the efficiency of the accreditation process.

30. The Panel indicates that the current process is slow, costly and subject to a "happenstance of workloads", with the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, currently made up of 19 Member States, making recommendations on a case-by-case basis for accreditation to the Economic and Social Council. The considerable backlog of applications is overwhelming an already overloaded process.

31. Some efforts have been made to improve the process. For example, an electronic meeting management and documentation system (a paperless committee) was recently introduced, and criteria and requirements for accreditation now appear on the United Nations web site. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations itself has done commendable work in improving its own working methods — streamlining the NGO questionnaire, issuing guidance to NGOs on reporting and monitoring and restructuring its meeting schedule for greater effectiveness. Similar improvements have been brought to the accreditation process for large global conferences. A number of funds and programmes and specialized agencies have also established new practices for accrediting NGOs.

32. There is nevertheless considerable scope for further simplification. I welcome the suggestions of the Panel, which, if implemented, would go a long way towards simplifying the process of accreditation. In essence, in paragraph 131 of its report, the Panel proposes two key improvements:

(a) The United Nations Secretariat should be tasked with conducting a thorough pre-screening of NGO applications for accreditation, according to clear criteria determined by an intergovernmental body;

(b) Member States should be provided with consolidated lists of applications for consideration.

E. Rights and responsibilities pertaining to participation

33. Proposals 22 and 23 of the Panel relate to the various categories of NGO status (general, special and Roster) and the differences in the rights of participation for each. These categories have been in existence for several decades, notwithstanding some minor changes introduced in 1996. There would be merit in reviewing the categories and the privileges associated with them — particularly in the light of informal practices which have evolved in recent years. Also, the General Assembly may wish to consider establishing a uniform regime of rights and responsibilities pertaining to the participation of NGOs in global conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly.

34. At the same time, the question of the responsibilities and accountability of the NGOs arises. For example, there are currently large numbers of NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations that are not complying with the requirement to submit quadrennial reports on their activities and how they relate to the overall goals and objectives of the global community. Member States may wish to explore the possibility of drawing up a code of conduct, mentioned in proposal 23 of the Panel, as an instrument to ensure that NGOs commit themselves to the aims of the Charter and act in a manner that reflects the intergovernmental character of the Organization.

V. Improving the United Nations Secretariat's dialogue with non-governmental organizations

35. The Panel suggests many ways in which the Secretariat can intensify its own dialogue with the NGO community. It suggests, in particular, a global Internet agora to survey public opinion and raise awareness on emerging issues (proposal 3) and public hearings to review the progress made in meeting globally agreed commitments (proposal 5). The United Nations Secretariat and other United Nations organizations already interact with NGOs in a variety of ways. I intend to review these experiences and the Panel's proposals, in consultation with NGOs, with a view to determining how best to intensify our dialogue with them.

36. The Panel also makes useful suggestions on how to promote and explain the work of the United Nations to a wide set of constituencies. The Department of Public Information currently maintains contacts with a vast network to which it disseminates information about the work of the Organization — most notably at the traditional NGO conference that it organizes each year. Taking into consideration the proposed enhancements to NGO participation in intergovernmental debates, I am asking the Department to see how its work with NGOs could be better linked to the priorities of the intergovernmental organs so as to enhance its relevance and impact. It will also be important to ensure that the Department's outreach activities complement and support those of the substantive departments, funds and programmes.

37. There are several other internal measures that will be taken to improve the Secretariat's dialogue with NGOs. These include, among other things, establishing a central database of NGOs and developing a body of best practices relating to NGO involvement in United Nations activities so that they can be replicated throughout the broader United Nations system. In addition, access to official documentation

will be greatly facilitated by the provision of free access to the Official Document System by the end of 2004.

VI. Enhancing country-level engagement with non-governmental organizations

38. I welcome the emphasis placed by the Panel on all branches of the United Nations system engaging with civil society at the country level. This is a relationship that has evolved considerably over the past three decades. NGOs now act as fully fledged partners in programme design and implementation and increasingly provide policy advice, analysis and advocacy. In crisis and post-conflict countries in particular, national and international NGOs are vital implementing partners, without which United Nations humanitarian assistance could not be delivered. They are also key participants in peace-building, reconciliation and transitions to civilian administration. Of course, Governments remain the main interlocutors for country-level engagement with the United Nations.

39. The participation of civil society in the development of national policies is critical to ensuring national ownership and relevance. The United Nations Development Group has been facilitating broad consultation with and participation of NGOs and other stakeholders in the poverty reduction strategy paper process — achieving, in a number of cases, pro-poor outcomes with genuine engagement in a fully consultative process.

40. Greater system-wide focus on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has further strengthened relations with civil society. The United Nations country teams are supporting Governments and civil society organizations in developing and revising the Millennium Development Goal reports in about 60 countries. In addition, the regional commissions are addressing issues of data comparability and policy coherence, to which NGOs have another important contribution to make. In a growing number of countries, civil society groups are spearheading advocacy campaigns for the Millennium Development Goals, both individually and in partnership with the country teams. NGOs are also key actors in making progress on the ground, for example, towards the achievement of the Goals.

41. The United Nations system is also encouraging the engagement of NGOs in the preparation of the common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. However, the nature and extent of their participation is uneven, reflecting a need to develop additional capacity in conducting policy dialogue and analysis and programme implementation. Where capacity is devoted to multi-stakeholder processes, the pay-offs have been significant. Resources and leadership will be needed, however, to ensure that today's best practices become the standard practices in the future.

A. Enhancing the capacity of non-governmental organizations at the country level

42. There are a number of promising measures already under way to enhance the capacity of NGOs at the country level. I intend to strengthen and replicate these initiatives in other locations. The Millennium Development Goal and poverty reduction strategy paper and processes are key opportunities for the United Nations Development Group to ensure that the rhetoric is put into practice — allowing adequate space for all constituencies, including parliamentarians and local authorities, to contribute to the goals of Governments as agreed at the United Nations. United Nations country teams should continue to facilitate the participation of NGOs in campaigning for and monitoring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and using the goals as benchmarks for the national poverty reduction strategy and poverty reduction strategy paper processes. In almost all countries, various parts of the United Nations system periodically fund workshops and learning exchanges with NGOs — with particular emphasis on poverty reduction strategy paper processes and Millennium Development Goal reporting and advocacy. The United Nations has also supported the formation of umbrella groups of NGOs in many sectors, particularly in primary health care. An NGO champions initiative for resident coordinators and resident representatives was launched in October 2003 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with 32 countries already participating.

43. The United Nations is also making real progress in its efforts to disseminate information about the work of the United Nations to all partners and constituencies. Use of easily accessible web sites, such as the national database in the United Republic of Tanzania, and ensuring the participation of NGOs in knowledge networks and discussion groups are encouraging first steps.

B. Enhancing the capacity of the United Nations resident coordinator system to engage with civil society

44. The Panel recognized the pivotal role played by the resident coordinator system in bringing together key United Nations system partners and civil society organizations in pursuit of national goals. I fully endorse the Panel's recommendations on the need for greater capacity among resident coordinators to identify, convene and broker key partnerships (proposals 10 and 11).

45. I have asked all resident coordinators to identify a qualified professional with relevant development experience to serve as a civil society focal point for the United Nations Development Group, who would coordinate civil society engagement by United Nations agencies in each country, with an additional dedicated staff member to be appointed to the office of the resident coordinator as soon as resources allow (proposals 11 and 25). Equally, resident coordinators will be asked to conduct orientation courses, where required, with a view to developing or enhancing partnerships with multiple constituencies (proposals 7 and 28).

46. I am encouraged by the Panel's recognition that the creation of NGO advisory groups at the country level to guide implementation of United Nations strategies would be beneficial (proposal 11). UNDP launched a pilot committee in Botswana in 2003, and I have asked that more resident coordinators constitute similar

committees, bringing together development experts from NGOs, academia, the media and local authorities in a forum for policy advice and participation. I believe this can be an effective means by which we can systematically support government by engaging NGOs and bridging the gulf between the deliberative and implementation aspects of our work.

47. I will establish a trust fund, inviting support from bilateral donors and foundations, to enhance the capacity of NGOs at the country level and to finance additional capacity in the office of the resident coordinator. A working group of the United Nations Development Group, chaired by UNDP as administrator of the fund, will guide the use of the fund (providing, for example, seed money for country teams that propose innovative initiatives) and develop strategies to promote further enhanced engagement with NGOs. The United Nations Development Group will work closely with the expanded Partnerships Office in the Secretariat, which should be a member of the aforementioned working group.

VII. Exploring the enlargement of the Partnerships Office⁴

48. As part of my second reform package from 2002, I decided to establish a Partnerships Office to bring the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and the Global Compact Office under the same institutional umbrella. The Office is in the process of being established and an Assistant Secretary-General position was recently authorized by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for the purpose of providing it with high-level leadership. The Panel's proposal to broaden the scope of the Partnerships Office to include other constituencies merits consideration. Included in an expanded Partnerships Office could be a small unit to develop organizational policy with respect to NGOs, the existing Non-Governmental Liaison Service, an Accreditation Unit and an Elected Representatives Liaison Unit.

49. The Non-Governmental Liaison Service currently provides information and outreach in regard to the work of the United Nations. The Panel points out that the Service is highly respected throughout the NGO community and is perceived as an objective and very useful source of expertise, guidance to the United Nations system focal points and the country teams, and support to NGOs that engage in United Nations meetings and events. However, it is now subject to the vagaries of voluntary funding and faces increasing difficulty in financing its budget from existing funding sources. Incorporating it into the Partnerships Office would give it greater institutional standing and funding stability. However, this would be dependent on the agreement of the 17 existing sponsors and related decisions on funding arrangements.

50. In addition, separate units for accreditation and liaison with elected representatives could be created to complement and support the initiatives mentioned in sections II and IV of the present report. This would be consistent with proposals 16 and 20 of the Panel.

⁴ The Panel proposed the establishment of an Office of Constituency Engagement and Partnerships. For purposes of simplicity and given that the Secretary-General has recently established a Partnerships Office, the latter term will be used.

51. Evidently, organizational units dealing with NGOs, elected representatives and the private sector each have their unique identity and purpose, which would continue to dictate the policies and approaches that are best suited to their particular needs. It is, however, desirable to have an institutional anchor, a greater coherence of approaches and stronger direction provided to the currently dispersed units dealing with the different facets of the Organization's interface with various partners. The Partnerships Office could be a central hub in a decentralized system and provide a single, more visible entry point for NGOs, while substantive departments, funds and programmes retain their own outreach and collaborative arrangements. The Office could also better foster the exchange of experience and collective learning.

52. I do not agree with the Panel's proposal to incorporate the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues into this structure (see proposal 24). From a substantive perspective, it would be difficult to argue in favour of this particular thematic area over others. The secretariat provides substantive and conference-servicing support to the Forum, which has a clear and direct reporting line to the Economic and Social Council. This makes the secretariat's current location in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs logical and institutionally consistent.

VIII. Managing the change process

53. Changes foreseen in the present report require careful management and oversight to ensure that genuine improvements to the relationship between the United Nations and NGOs are achieved. To this end, improvements are needed in four particular areas.

54. First, there is a need for a more organized and sustained dialogue with the NGO community, in particular as regards the implementation of the present report but also on the broad range of issues to which NGOs have an important contribution to make. While the Partnerships Office could assume an important coordination role, it is the responsibility of departments, funds and programmes to ensure that the constituencies interested in their areas of concern are systematically consulted.

55. Second, constituency engagement and partnership concerns must be incorporated into the Organization's human resource processes, including recruitment, promotion and annual appraisal (see proposal 28). Staff at all levels will be offered training to improve their skills in dealing with broader constituencies and factor NGO considerations into their work, using, in particular, the United Nations System Staff College for this purpose.

56. Third, the implementation of these measures will require modest yet essential resources. As far as possible, I intend to build on existing capacities and make better use of existing resources for enhancing the engagement between the United Nations and NGOs. However, enlargement of the Partnerships Office would have some modest budgetary implications in the context of the budget for the biennium 2006-2007. I also appeal to Member States to make generous voluntary contributions to the trust funds which will be established for the specific purposes outlined in sections III and VI of the present report.

57. Finally, I wish to stress that I am committed to providing the leadership necessary for these changes to take effect and I will be stressing their importance to

my senior managers and the heads of United Nations agencies, in my capacity as head of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (proposal 29).

58. I will report to the General Assembly periodically on the implementation of the various reforms set out in the present report.

During the last few years, the United Nations has been faced with a number of challenges. The most significant of these are the increasing demands for resources, the need to improve the efficiency of the organization, and the need to ensure that the United Nations is able to respond effectively to the needs of the world. In order to meet these challenges, it is necessary to undertake a series of reforms. These reforms should be aimed at improving the financial, administrative, and operational aspects of the organization. It is also necessary to ensure that the United Nations is able to respond effectively to the needs of the world. This requires a commitment to the principles of transparency, accountability, and efficiency. The reforms should be implemented in a phased manner, with a view to completing them by the end of the decade. It is important to note that the reforms should not be seen as an end in themselves, but as a means to achieve the United Nations' goals and objectives. The United Nations should continue to monitor the progress of the reforms and make adjustments as necessary. It is also important to ensure that the reforms are implemented in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. The United Nations should continue to work towards a more efficient and effective organization, in order to better serve the needs of the world.

VII

Managing the change process

The change process is a complex one, involving a number of different stakeholders and interests. It is important to ensure that the process is managed in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. This requires a commitment to transparency, accountability, and efficiency. The change process should be implemented in a phased manner, with a view to completing it by the end of the decade. It is important to note that the change process should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve the United Nations' goals and objectives. The United Nations should continue to monitor the progress of the change process and make adjustments as necessary. It is also important to ensure that the change process is implemented in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. The United Nations should continue to work towards a more efficient and effective organization, in order to better serve the needs of the world.

First, there is a need to establish a clear vision for the change process. This vision should be based on the United Nations' values and principles, and should be communicated to all stakeholders. It is important to ensure that the vision is clear and concise, and that it is understood by all stakeholders. The vision should also be based on a realistic assessment of the current situation, and should take into account the needs and interests of all stakeholders. It is important to note that the vision should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve the United Nations' goals and objectives. The United Nations should continue to monitor the progress of the change process and make adjustments as necessary. It is also important to ensure that the change process is implemented in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. The United Nations should continue to work towards a more efficient and effective organization, in order to better serve the needs of the world.

Second, it is important to establish a clear structure for the change process. This structure should be based on the United Nations' values and principles, and should be communicated to all stakeholders. It is important to ensure that the structure is clear and concise, and that it is understood by all stakeholders. The structure should also be based on a realistic assessment of the current situation, and should take into account the needs and interests of all stakeholders. It is important to note that the structure should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve the United Nations' goals and objectives. The United Nations should continue to monitor the progress of the change process and make adjustments as necessary. It is also important to ensure that the change process is implemented in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. The United Nations should continue to work towards a more efficient and effective organization, in order to better serve the needs of the world.

Third, it is important to establish a clear timeline for the change process. This timeline should be based on the United Nations' values and principles, and should be communicated to all stakeholders. It is important to ensure that the timeline is clear and concise, and that it is understood by all stakeholders. The timeline should also be based on a realistic assessment of the current situation, and should take into account the needs and interests of all stakeholders. It is important to note that the timeline should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve the United Nations' goals and objectives. The United Nations should continue to monitor the progress of the change process and make adjustments as necessary. It is also important to ensure that the change process is implemented in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. The United Nations should continue to work towards a more efficient and effective organization, in order to better serve the needs of the world.

Finally, it is important to ensure that the change process is implemented in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. This requires a commitment to transparency, accountability, and efficiency. The change process should be implemented in a phased manner, with a view to completing it by the end of the decade. It is important to note that the change process should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve the United Nations' goals and objectives. The United Nations should continue to monitor the progress of the change process and make adjustments as necessary. It is also important to ensure that the change process is implemented in a way that is consistent with the United Nations' values and principles. The United Nations should continue to work towards a more efficient and effective organization, in order to better serve the needs of the world.



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**Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and
allocation of items: reports of the General Committee**

Letter dated 10 September 2004 from the President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly addressed to the President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly

I have the honour to bring it to your attention that the General Assembly, at the 94th plenary meeting of its fifty-eighth session, on 10 September 2004, on the recommendation of the General Committee and in accordance with paragraph 2 (c) of the annex to its resolution 58/316, decided to submit to the Assembly, at its fifty-ninth session, section II, entitled "Provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly organized under headings corresponding to the priorities of the Organization, as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005", of the report of the Secretary-General on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/58/864).

At the same meeting, the General Assembly also decided, in accordance with paragraph 5 (d) of the annex to the same resolution, to submit to the Assembly, at its fifty-ninth session, annex I, entitled "Draft programme of work of the plenary of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session", of the same report, as orally revised on the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union that item 46 of the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session, "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", be considered in a joint debate with item 56, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

(Signed) Julian R. Hunte

* A/59/150.

